

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TRIPOL 01156 061239Z
ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4717

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 1156

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FOR NEA/AFN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, LY, US, ECON, SCUL
SUBJ: GOALS IN RELATIONS WITH LIBYA

REF: STATE 205008

OUR COMMENTS ON GOALS ARE KEYED TO PARAGRAPHS OF REFTEL.

I. US OPPOSITION TO LIBYAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM TO BE EFFECTIVE SHOULD BE SELECTIVE AND SPECIFIC. SHOTGUN APPROACH IMMEDIATELY RUNS INTO SEMANTIC PROBLEMS WITH LIBYANS CLAIMING THAT THEY ARE NOT SUPPORTING TERRORISTS BUT FREEDOM FIGHTERS WHICH IS BOTH LEGITIMATE AND PRAISEWORTHY. RECENTLY LIBYANS HAVE BEEN POINTING OUT THAT EVEN US IS NOW SUPPORTING SOUTHERN AFRICAN LEADERS THAT ONLY A FEW YEARS AGO WERE CHARACTERIZED AS TERRORISTS. CONTINUOUS GENERAL CARPING AT LIBYANS RUNS RISK OF DAMAGING CONTACTS AND ACCESS TO LIBYAN OFFICIALDOM WHICH IS IMPORTANT FOR US IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE OTHER GOALS SUCH AS PROMOTION OF COMMERCIAL INTERESTS AND PROTECTION OF US CITIZENS. NEVERTHELESS, LETTING LIBYANS KNOW WE ARE AWARE OF THEIR SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC OPERATIONS OR ORGANIZATIONS MIGHT BE EFFECTIVE IN LIMITING SUCH SUPPORT. IN EXPRESSING US
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DISPLEASURE WITH LIBYAN OPPOSITION TO MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT WE SHOULD CONTINUE EMPHASIZE POSITIVE US INITIATIVES THUS COUNTERING LIBYAN CHARGES THAT WE HAVE NOT EXPLAINED OUR POLICIES TO THEM.

MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIP AT CHARGE LEVEL AS SIGNAL OF OUR DISPLEASURE WITH LIBYAN POLICIES HAS BEEN

EFFECTIVE BUT WE SHOULD BE AWARE THAT, IF LIBYANS
BECOME OVERLY DISCOURAGED AT PROSPECTS OF IMPROVED
RELATIONS WITH US, A DETERIORATION COULD SET IN WHICH
MIGHT JEOPARDIZE OUR CONSIDERABLE INTERESTS HERE.

II AND III. THE GOALS EXPRESSED IN II AND III ARE
SUCCINCT AND TO THE POINT. IT DOES, HOWEVER, OCCUR
TO US THAT THERE IS AN ADDITIONAL GOAL IN OUR
RELATIONS WITH LIBYA WHICH IS TO PREVENT THIS STRATEGIC
REGION FROM BECOMING A BASE FOR SOVIET OPERATIONS. OUR
MEANS FOR ACHIEVING THIS GOAL ARE LIMITED GIVEN AN
ABSOLUTE BAN ON A MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP. WE
SHOULD, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN OUR INTERESTS
AND INFLUENCE IN THE LIBYAN CIVIL AVIATION FIELD BOTH
THROUGH SALES OF COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT AND FAA TRAINING
PROGRAMS FOR LIBYAN CIVILIAN TECHNICIANS.
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